



14th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

POSSIBLE PHASED RE-OPENING OF SCHOOL – 1st JUNE 2020

Firstly, I hope this email finds you and your family safe and well.

On Sunday 10th May 2020, the Prime Minister made an announcement regarding the phased re-opening of schools.

I have taken some time to digest the information and consider my initial response, taking into account many factors. I have been part of education for 25 years and have been incredibly fortunate to have been involved in shaping many children's lives during this time. I have been privileged to work alongside many amazing staff and have been supported by many wonderful parents and carers.

The pending decisions will be some of the most challenging I will have ever have had to make and, whilst many of our school family will support us, some will inevitably be unhappy. However, we all share one vital commonality; the safety of the Delapre Primary School family is paramount.

We were provided with no initial plans from the government when the original announcement was made, and since then have been bombarded with 'guidelines' including social distancing; having less pupils in school; splitting groups of children; staggered starts and ends to the school day as well as staggered break/lunchtimes. The government is trying to suggest a 'one size fits all' plan and it simply does not work.

As a Headteacher, I most definitely want our staff and children back in school, when it is safe. I understand the struggle of having the children at home whilst trying to juggle many other jobs and activities. I, personally, have had to learn many new concepts in order to support my daughter in her GCSE maths lessons (and I am a maths teacher!).

As I write this, I must be honest with you. I am not going to sit here and tell you that we can achieve safe social distancing in a school as large as ours. We can make things *safer*, we can *slightly reduce* the risk, but as soon as we open the doors, there will be risk.

I want to clarify, once again, that nothing will change prior to half term and we will continue to provide schooling for the children of key workers; those children who are vulnerable or have an EHC Plan. Our definition of key workers will not change either.

From June 1st, the Government is proposing that children in Year R, 1 and 6 return to school, should its criteria be met. We have been asked to prioritise this provision in the following order: Year R, Year 1 and then Year 6.



Class sizes can be no more than 15, so we would be looking at opening on a part-time basis only. We are currently looking at how to ensure the classroom is as safe as it can be, including 2m spacing between desks in years 1 and 6, removing all non-essential resources, staggered start and play times and creative use of school spaces so that children do not come into contact with each other. The groups of potentially 15 cannot mix with each other at all throughout the day and this will include playtimes. Parents would not be able to enter the school for any reason and a set of protocols around dropping and collecting younger children would be in place.

The re-opening needs to be in a way that is measured, reduces risk and is guided by science. Schools are being asked to work towards re-opening, provided that the five key tests set by the government justify the changes at the time. This means that schools need to plan ahead of the confirmation that these five tests have been met.

Delapre will base its phased re-opening plan on the government guidelines included in the following documents:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/opening-schools-for-more-children-and-young-people-initial-planning-framework-for-schools-in-england>

The government suggests that, in mainstream schools, class sizes should be halved to 15. At this stage, we are not sure that all of our classes are **large enough for this**, so we will be tailoring our plan to fit our setting specifically. There are many issues to consider, including the logistics of arriving at school, leaving school, break times and lunchtimes. Further details on all of this will be provided to parents once we have a clear idea on numbers and a plan in place.

One of the key factors that will help develop our plan is finding out, from you, what your thoughts are about bringing your child/children back to school from June 1st (assuming the five tests are met and school is allowed to re-open).

I will need to consider various different models in order to facilitate the school re-opening to these specific year groups.

Clearly, Delapre Primary School will only consider re-opening if it is safe to do so. However, I would like to stress that despite our best efforts at minimising the risk of virus transmission, we would never be able to eliminate this entirely.

Please reply as soon as possible via email (phasedreturn@delapre.northants.sch.uk) answering to one of the following:

Yes, I will send my child/children back to school if it opens on June 1st because;

No, I will not send my child/children back to school if the school opens on June 1st because;

I am unsure about sending my child/children back to school if it opens on June 1st because;

Please also put the name of your child/children in your email along with their class.

I would very much appreciate a prompt response with this in order that we can hopefully pull together a plan that is viable for Delapre Primary School.

Please respond to the email address stated above as soon as possible, but at the latest by 3pm on Monday 18th May.

Thank you for your continued help and support.

Yours faithfully



Harry Portrey
Headteacher

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